Eat, Pray, Latke: Jewish Unification Through Holiday Food

Instructor Name: Taylor Rosen

Spring 2022

Contact Information:

Instructor: Taylor Rosen

Email: tmr8@rice.edu

Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description:

From as early as the 6th century BCE, Jews have been expelled from their historic homelands to countries all over the world. This movement, known as the Jewish Diaspora, led to the development of numerous ethnic divisions within the Jewish culture, such as the Ashkenazi, the Sephardic, and more. The global migration of the Jewish people has led to separate religious practices and cultural diversity within the religion. However, holiday celebrations have served as a bridge to unite Jews from different backgrounds through shared rituals, prayer, and, most importantly, food. Therefore, throughout this class, students will examine: ***why does food play such a central role in Jewish holidays?*** To investigate this, students will learn about the historical background and symbolism behind classic Jewish holiday cuisine. At the end of each lecture, students will participate in a Kahoot quiz to test their knowledge of the historical significance and symbolism of each holiday and its food. The following week, everyone will participate in a hands-on cooking tutorial based on the previous in-class lecture, allowing students to foster their interest and appreciation for unfamiliar cultures. At the end of the course, students will be expected to prepare a traditional Jewish holiday food of their choice and examine how food impacts their own holiday celebrations.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students will be able to...

- Recognize and define the historical significance of specific Jewish holidays to the religion
- Identify the symbolic themes associated with different Jewish holidays and examine how these are illustrated through food
- Bake a Jewish holiday food

Assessments:

- **Introduction Essay:** Write a one-page essay about your personal experience with Jewish holidays and their corresponding food if applicable. If not, discuss why you are interested in learning about the different Jewish holidays and the significance of their food.
- **Reading Responses:** Write a 200-300 word response before class regarding your thoughts on each lecture's corresponding reading material or videos.
- **Kahoot Quiz:** Test your understanding of the historical context and significance of each week's holiday and showcased food through questions pertaining to class lectures and reading/video assignments.
- **Final Presentations:**
    - **Final Essay Presentation:** Students will write a 2-page essay discussing *their own* holiday traditions and the role food plays in their own celebrations. The papers should discuss the significance of the holiday to their religion/lives. In addition, students should discuss the religious and/or historical background of their holiday and examine the symbolism behind certain foods during the holiday. Students will present their research paper to the class in the form of a 5-minute PowerPoint presentation.
    - **Holiday Food Presentation:** Students should apply their baking skills acquired throughout the course to prepare a traditional dish from a *Jewish holiday* of their choice. Prior to sharing their dish with the class, each student will be required to give a brief introduction (1 to 2 minutes) on the prepared food and how it relates to its corresponding Jewish holiday. Students must also include the recipe and pictures of their baking process as part of their presentation.

Grade Evaluation:

- **Participation (Attendance, Reading Responses, and Kahoot Quizzes):** 45%
    - **Attendance:** 10%
    - **Reading Responses:** 20%
    - **Kahoot Quizzes:** 15%
- **Introduction Essay:** 10%
- **Final Presentations:** 45%
    - **Final Essay Presentation:** 30%
    - **Holiday Food Presentation:** 15%

Required Texts and Materials:

- All required texts and videos will be accessible through Canvas.

Grade Policy:

Final course grades will be determined using Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory designations. Final grades above 70% will be considered satisfactory, while grades below 70% will be considered unsatisfactory.

Absence Policies:

Since this class only gathers once a week, it is important that students attend every class session. Every student will receive one unexcused absence for the semester. However, students will only be granted two absences, excused or unexcused, overall. Exceptions to the absence policy can be made if special circumstances permit. Please send any questions regarding excused absences to tmr8@rice.edu at least one day before class.

Rice Honor Code:

In this course, all students will be held to the standards of the Rice Honor Code, a code that you pledged to honor when you matriculated at this institution. If you are unfamiliar with the details of this code and how it is administered, you should consult the Honor System Handbook at http://honor.rice.edu/honor-system-handbook/. This handbook outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of your academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process.

Disability Resource Center:

If you have a documented disability or other condition that may affect academic performance you should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with the Disability Resource Center (Allen Center, Room 111 / adarice@rice.edu / x5841) to determine the accommodations you need; and 2) talk with me to discuss your accommodation needs.

Syllabus Change Policy:

This syllabus is only a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice.

Course Schedule:

	Topics and Highlights:	**Assignments:**
Week 1 (1/10):	**Introductions & Lecture 1: Shabbat**	• Unit Reading Response • Readings: ○ Judaism, Founder, Beliefs & Facts
	• Introductions: Meet and Greet • Review Syllabus and Expectations	

	• Lecture on Shabbat and Challah • Kahoot Quiz	○ Is Judaism Obsessed with Food? ○ What is Shabbat? ○ What is Challah?
Week 2 (1/17):	**Lecture 2: Rosh Hashanah**	• Unit Reading Response • Readings/Videos: ○ Rosh Hashanah: Dates, Traditions & History ○ How to Blow a Shofar ○ Why Apples and Honey? • **Introductory Essay due 1/23 at 11:59 p.m.**
	• Class Discussion about Readings and Reading Responses • Lecture on Rosh Hashanah and Apples/Honey ○ Briefly Discuss Yom Kippur • Kahoot Quiz	
Week 3 (1/24):	**Lecture 3: Passover**	• Unit Reading Response • Readings: ○ Passover: History ○ The Seder Plate ○ What It Means to Keep Kosher for Passover
	• Guest Lecturer: Dr. Furman	
Week 4 (1/31):	**Baking Unit 1: Challah**	• Review Braiding Method 1: ○ How to Braid a Three Strand Loaf • **Final Presentations Sign Up Due by 2/6**
	• Baking in Wiess 2nd Floor Kitchen • Recipe in Files on Canvas	
Week 5 (2/7):	**Baking Unit 2: Honey Apple Cake**	• No Homework
	• Baking in Wiess 2nd Floor Kitchen • Recipe for Class: ○ Link to Honey Apple Cake Recipe	
Week 6 (2/14):	**Baking Unit 3: "Matzah Crack"**	• Video Demonstration: ○ How to Make Matzo Crack
	• Baking in Wiess 2nd Floor Kitchen • Recipe for Class: ○ Link to "Matzah Crack" Recipe	

Week 7 (2/21):	**Lecture 4: Hanukkah**	• Unit Reading Response • Video: ○ What is Hanukkah?
	• Class Discussion about Readings and Reading Responses • Lecture on Hanukkah and Latkes • Play some Dreidel and Listen to Hanukkah Music • Kahoot Quiz	
Week 8 (2/28):	**Baking Unit 4: Latkes (Potato Pancakes)**	• Review Techniques Needed for Class: ○ Latkes | Basics with Babish
	• Baking in Wiess 2nd Floor Kitchen • Recipe for Class: ○ Link to Latke Recipe	
Week 9 (3/7):	**Lecture 5: Purim *(Optional: Costume Day for Extra Credit)***	• Unit Reading Response • Video: ○ What is Purim? An Introduction to the Jewish Holiday
	• Class Discussion about Readings and Reading Responses • Read Book of Esther and Discuss Significance of the Holiday ○ Book of Esther in Files on Canvas • Kahoot Quiz	
Week 10 (3/14):	**No Class - Spring Break**	• Enjoy the break and relax • **Rank Cookie Filling Choices by 3/16**
Week 11 (3/21):	**Baking Unit 5: Hamantaschens (Shortbread Cookies)**	• Video Demonstration: ○ Hamantaschen Filling and Folding
	• Baking in Wiess 2nd Floor Kitchen • Recipe for Class: ○ Link to Dough Recipe	
Week 12 (3/28):	**Final Project Presentations**	• Prepare for Final Presentation
	• Listen to Presentations • Enjoy Some Traditional Holiday Food	

Week 13 (4/4):	**Final Project Presentations**	• Prepare for Final Presentation
	• Listen to Presentations • Enjoy Some Traditional Holiday Food	
Week 14 (4/11):	**Final Project Presentations**	• Prepare for Final Presentation
	• Listen to Presentations • Enjoy Some Traditional Holiday Food	
Week 15 (4/18):	**Final Project Presentations**	• Prepare for Final Presentation
	• Listen to Presentations • Enjoy Some Traditional Holiday Food	